



## Regional Transportation Investment District of King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties

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February 8, 2005

To: RTID Executive Board

Fr: Legislative Subcommittee Members  
Councilman Gary Nelson  
Councilman Calvin Goings  
Councilman David Irons  
Kjristine Lund, Project Manager

Re: Proposed 2005 Legislative Session Agenda

### **Current Situation**

The RTID board through its efforts to bring a plan before the voters in 2004 found the following limitations in its statutory authority:

- Over-reliance on regional funds for state mega project costs
- Ballot title complexity
- Over reliance on the sales tax
- Project eligibility constraints
- Tolling authority limitations
- Local government match barriers
- Bonding constraints

Governor Locke through his supplemental 03-05 budget reduced funding for the RTID election costs by \$1.8 million and project cost review by \$3 million, reducing funding for the regional investment district election planning by \$4.8 million.

Lobby groups representing business and labor are advocating for a state gas tax increase and they are supporting reforms to regional governance and finance. These reforms are not defined except for technical recommendations from RTID.

### **Proposed Legislative Agenda**

#### 1. Streamline the Ballot Title

To avoid a court challenge because of the existing ambiguous statutory language, have the Legislature create a ballot title “template” so the RTID can simply fill in the blanks for approving the plan, creating the district and authorizing the projects, taxes and fees.

2. Clarify the Tolling Authority  
Clarify the roles of the RTID, ESDOT, and the Transportation Commission so that tolling can be used on either Lake Washington Floating Bridge and for operations and maintenance of the toll-financed facilities.
3. Expand Project Eligibility  
Expand RTID project eligibility to include preservation projects.
4. Revenue Authority  
Reflecting RTID's concern over reliance on the sales tax, ask the Legislature to reduce the sales tax (to 0.3%) and to increase the motor vehicle excise tax (by 0.3%). Ensure broad tolling authority.
5. Reduce Local Match Requirement  
Lower the match from 33% to 10%.
6. Set Parameters for State Bonding Authority  
Authorize DOT to issue state bonds for RTID, backed by that portion of state gas tax revenues distributed to the three RTID counties, and cities within those counties, but repaid by RTID revenues.
7. Support for state-wide gas tax increase  
RTID needs to have state revenue partner with regional funds to complete mega projects and to assist cities and counties with transportation needs. State gas tax funds would help "buy-down" the regional share of RTID projects from all three counties.
8. Joint Ballot  
Be open to changes that would facilitate partnership with transit agencies for successful ballot measure.
9. Provide Funding for 05-07 Biennium  
State funding is needed to prepare a regional package for the ballot. WSDOT and local agencies will need to update project cost estimates, financing plans will require updating, and administrative staff will be needed to develop the required agreements to place a measure on the ballot. A public education program will also be necessary to explain projects and to provide information about the tax package. \$4.8 million in unused RTID funds previously appropriated to WSDOT's budget should be carried forward from this biennium to the next to cover these costs.